

S E C R E T

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DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
Weapon and Space Systems Intelligence Committee

Attachment to
NFIB-82.4/4
13 June 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Soviet Missile System Designators ☐

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REFERENCE: NFIB-82.4/3, 15 May 1978

OD/A Registry
File *Committee*

1. The Weapon and Space Systems Intelligence Committee (WSSIC) has reviewed and updated the reference. The enclosure supersedes the list of Soviet missile system designators contained therein. ☐

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2. The enclosure includes the designators AT-5, SA-N-5, SS-N-18 Mod 3, SS-X-23, AT-6, and SA-8a and SA-8b which were assigned in Memorandums for Holders of the reference dated 30 June, 8 August, 19 October, 20 October, 19 December, and 19 December 1978, respectively. ☐

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3. In order to more precisely define the surface-to-air and antiballistic missile systems, the DESIGNATOR/NICKNAME/TYPE (CLASSIFICATION) columns have been changed to read DESIGNATOR/MISSILE NICKNAME/RADAR NICKNAME/(CLASSIFICATION). ☐

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4. The SSC-1a, SSC-2a and SSC-2b cruise missiles probably have been retired from the Soviet inventory and are so noted in the enclosure. ☐

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R. E. HINEMAN
Chairman

Enclosure:
As stated

(12 June 1979)

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ENCLOSURE

SOVIET MISSILE SYSTEM DESIGNATORS

1. The Weapon and Space Systems Intelligence Committee (WSSIC) has the responsibility for assigning letter-number designators to foreign missile systems. The National Foreign Intelligence Board is advised when new designators are assigned. Guidelines governing the assignment and use of Soviet missile system designators are formulated by WSSIC in consultation with

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2. The assignment and use of designators are governed by the following:

a. A designator is assigned when it becomes apparent that a system is engaged in a viable system flight test development program leading to operational use. To distinguish it from an operationally deployed system, an "X" is inserted between the letters and the number; for example, the SA-X-11. If it is a naval system, an "N" is also included (e.g., SS-NX-17).

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b. The letter "X" is removed from the designator when the system is considered to have reached an operationally deployed status.

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c. Variants of ballistic missile systems which significantly affect threat characteristics are assigned "Mod" numbers. Initially, they were assigned letter suffixes which have been retained (i.e., SS-1a, SS-1b and SS-1c).

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d. Letter suffixes for variants in the other missile categories (e.g., SS-N-2a, SA-2b) will continue to be used. For these missile systems, "Mod" numbers signify significant differences in performance/threat within a given variant (e.g., SS-N-3b Mod 2).

e. Assignment of missile nicknames is the responsibility of the Air Standardization Coordinating Committee (ASCC).

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f. Classification guidelines:

(1) All letter-number designators (e.g., SS-4) when used alone are unclassified.

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(2) The combination of a letter-number designator with an ASCC-assigned nickname takes on the classification of the nickname. ☐

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They are classified according to source. They are replaced by an unclassified WSSIC-assigned letter-number designator when the system's role and characteristics are better understood. ☐

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(4) Although all WSSIC-assigned designators are unclassified individually, the entire list is classified SECRET. ☐

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